

REMARKS

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated November 19, 2009 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claim 9 is hereby amended. Claims 13, 14 and 22-28 are hereby canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the contents contained therein. Claims 29-32 are hereby added. Accordingly, claims 1-12, 15-21 and 29-32 are currently pending, of these, claims 1-8 and 15-21 are withdrawn from consideration. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a and e) as being anticipated by U.S. Publication No. 2004/0187527 to Kim et al. (hereinafter “*Kim*”). Office Action at page 2, ¶ 3. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Independent claim 9 is allowable over the cited reference in that claim 9 recites a combination of elements including, for example, “draining residual washing water while performing intermediate spinning of the drum at a high speed for making an intermediate extraction of water when the washing is finished; supplying steam into the tub or drum having the laundry thereto to sterilize or sanitize the laundry when the intermediate spinning is finished; rinsing at least once with washing water supplied to the tub or drum when supplying the steam to sterilize or santizie the laundry is finished.” *Kim* does not disclose, expressly or inherently, at least these features of the claimed invention.

Kim discloses washing, rinsing, intermittent dewatering and supplying steam during washing or rinsing. See *Kim* at ¶¶ [0064]-[0066]. *Kim* is entirely silent regarding any disclosure, express or inherent, concerning “supplying steam into the tub or drum having the laundry thereto to sterilize or sanitize the laundry when the intermediate spinning is finished” and before filling of water to rinse, as recited in independent claim 9. *Kim* discloses that “[t]he aforementioned rinsing and intermittent dewatering processes are alternately and repeatedly carried out.” *Kim* at ¶ [0065]. Therefore, it is clear that *Kim*’s rinsing step is a different step from the intermittent dewatering process. Further, *Kim* only discloses supplying steam during rinsing.

The temperature of steam used for sterilization is very high. Therefore, if the steam would be applied directly to dry laundry, there is the risk of burning the laundry. On the other hand, if water is stored in the drum or the tub, the temperature of the supplied steam will decrease due to the lower water temperature. In order to sterilize laundry, the amount of supplied steam as well as the steam supplying time would have to be increased. This, however, requires more energy to sterilize the laundry with steam.

The many benefits and advantages of the claimed invention overcome these problems. Since the supplying of steam is performed after the intermediate spinning step and before rinsing, energy can be saved and laundry can be sterilized or sanitized more efficiently. *See Specification* at p. 13 line 15 - p. 14 line 5. Further, as recited in claim 9, “rinsing at least once with washing water supplied to the tub or drum” is performed “when supplying steam to sterilize or sanitize the laundry is finished.” Therefore, various sterilized microbes are extracted from the laundry efficiently. Since *Kim* only discloses supplying steam during rinsing, this benefit and advantage cannot be obtained. Thus, *Kim* does not teach or suggest “draining residual washing water while performing intermediate spinning of the drum at a high speed for making an intermediate extraction of water when the washing is finished; supplying steam into the tub or drum having the laundry thereto to sterilize or sanitize the laundry when the intermediate spinning is finished; rinsing at least once with washing water supplied to the tub or drum when supplying the steam to sterilize or sanitize the laundry is finished,” as recited in independent claim 9. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a and e) rejection of independent claim 9. Claims 10 and 11 depend from independent claim 9. It stands to reason that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(a and e) rejection of those dependent claims should be withdrawn as well.

Claims 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Kim* in view of EP Publication No. 1275767 to Dober et al. (hereinafter “*Dober*”). *Office Action* at p. 4, ¶ 8. The rejection of claims 13 and 14 is moot as claims 13 and 14 are canceled herein. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the remaining claim and request reconsideration.

Dober fails to cure the deficiencies of *Kim* with respect to independent claim 9. Indeed, the Office only relied upon *Dober* to purportedly disclose “a method for a washing machine where laundry is washed... spin extracted ... then is steamed for 5-20 minutes to remove the creases resulting from the spin extraction.” *Office Action* at p. 4, ¶ 11. Because none of the cited

references, either individually or in combination, teaches or suggests each and every element of independent claim 9, they also fail to teach or suggest each and every element of claim 12, which depends from claim 9. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Office to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claim 12.

For the same or similar reasons discussed above regarding claims 9-12, the cited references do not teach or suggest the features of new claims 29-32. Hence, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 29-32 are patentable over the cited references.

The application is in condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0911.

Dated: February 19, 2010

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